

WASHINGTON, SUNDAY, JULY 20, 1902.

VENICE: QUEEN OF THE ADRIATIC



Chiesa Della Salute.

Destruction Said to Be Impending Over the Most Picturesque and Romantic City in the World, Long the Home of Poetry and Art and a Mecca of Every Tourist Since the Days of Travel Began—Rich and Beautiful Architecture, Statuary, and Paintings—Buildings Weighted With the Historical Associations of Century Upon Century.

VENICE—"The Queen of the Adriatic"—doomed! Can you picture such a thing?

It seems like the irony of fate that this magnificent old city, with its grand and thrilling memories of those medieval days when it proudly reared its head above all the world, should have stood for centuries against the ravages of destructive wars and vast political and civil changes, only to be threatened with total demolition here in the twentieth century.

On last Tuesday morning, without a moment's warning, the famous Campanile, or bell tower of St. Mark's Cathedral, to whose summit Napoleon rode on horseback to gaze down upon the ancient city he had conquered, collapsed and fell into a chaos of broken stone.

Sounded the Warning.

In the detonation of that fall there boomed out to all the world the startling warning that Venice itself might collapse.

Investigations were at once set on foot, with the result that Prof. Wagner, the city architect, says he fears the whole city is doomed to destruction.

He says that the subsoil has deteriorated, and the piles and pillars upon which the whole city rests are rotten and unable to much longer stand the pressure on them.

Shrinkage and sinking have been observed in the subsoil for many years, although and official commission recently declared that there was no danger from these causes.

To Rebuild the Tower.

The citizens of Venice alone have already contributed nearly \$200,000 for the immediate reconstruction of the bell tower of St. Mark's Cathedral, and it is believed the Italian government will give an equal amount, which, added to the contributions for the purpose throughout all Italy, will insure the reconstruction of the historic old Campanile in all its medieval glory.

Prof. Wagner advocates the restoration of the loggia of Sansovino, a portion of which was wrecked by the falling edifice, but not the tower itself. He says that if the tower actually is rebuilt, it should be in thoroughly modern style.

Centers of Interest and Life.

It would be difficult to conceive of a worse calamity befalling the Queen of the Adriatic than the destruction of one of those famous old structures which form one of its chief objects of pride. St. Mark's Cathedral and the Palace of the Doges are the centers of interest and life in Venice.

There seem to focus the life and business of the city. There is the Mecca of the hordes of tourists.

And the Campanile, or bell tower, was as certainly an inseparable part of the Cathedral as the famous Bridge of Sighs is a part of the Doges' Palace.

In all Venice there was no object of

more historic interest than the time-worn Campanile of St. Mark's. It was 322 feet in height, and reared its marble summit high above every other structure in the city.

To the tourist approaching the city it was the first object to catch the eye from the car window or ship's deck. Owing to the extreme lowness of the small islands and patches of land around the city, the bell tower was visible for many miles.

It was founded in 838 and restored in 1329. In 1417 a magnificent marble top was placed on the tower, and in 1517 it was crowned with the figure of a golden angel nearly sixteen feet in height.

It was not necessary to climb steps to reach the top of the tower; the ascent was made on an inclined passageway that wound around the interior of the walls, with thirty-eight bends in it.

Where Napoleon Rode His Horse.

It was up this incline that Napoleon rode his horse to the summit of the tower, and from his saddle gazed down upon the historic old city which he had invaded with his conquering hosts.

At the top of the tower a fire watchman was stationed day and night with a telescope. The view from the tower top embraced the whole city, the Lagoon, and the Grand Canal, a part of the Adriatic, and, on particularly clear days, even a part of the Alps.

Clara Erskine Clement, in her book, "The Queen of the Adriatic," says that from the tower, in the great days of the Venetian Republic, the first glimpse of homecoming war vessels was seen and signaled. In 1518 there hung, half way up the tower, a wooden cage, in which prisoners were kept until they starved to death.

Four Bells of Fate.

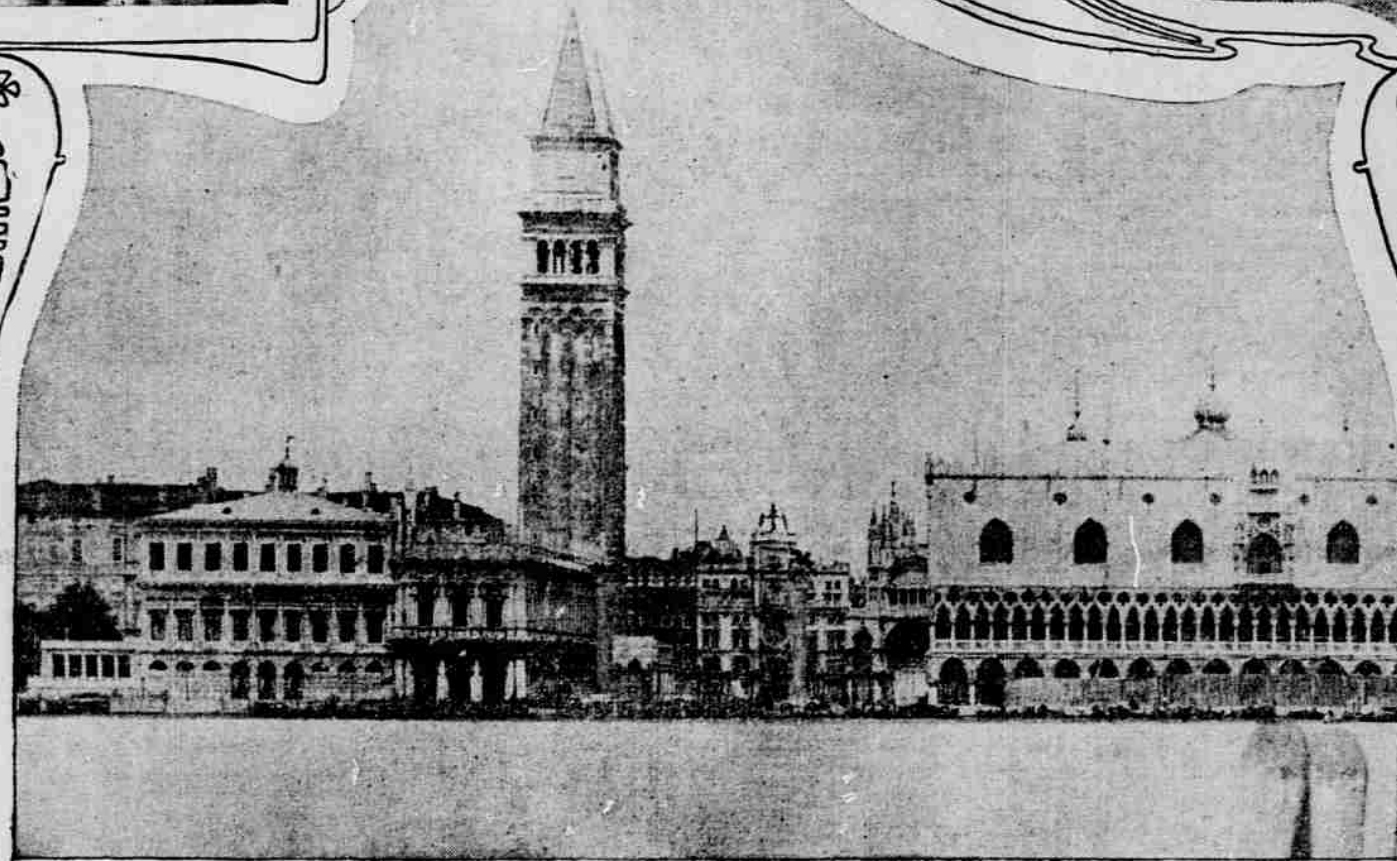
In the olden days there were four bells sounded for different purposes: La marangola was sounded at dawn to call the laboring classes; la sestamozana opened the official bureau; la trotterar called the council to duty, and the bell del malefizio tolled out the requiem for those who were to be put to death.

A fifth bell later was brought from Candia, and was tolled only on an Ascension Day.

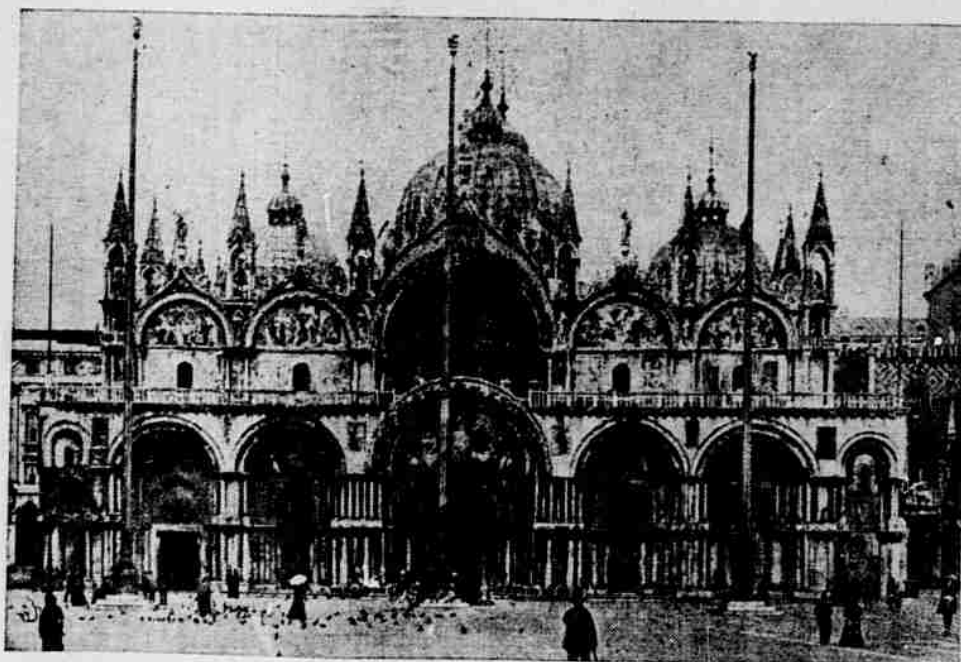
The loggetta, or vestibule, on the east side of the Campanile was erected by Sansovino, the famous architect, in 1546. It was once a rendezvous for the nobility, and was afterward used as a



Grand Canal.



The Bell Tower of St. Mark's.



St. Mark's Cathedral.

waiting room for guards during the sessions of the councils. There were bronze statues of Peace, Apollo, Mercury, and Pallas, and some reliefs on the coping that were also of Sansovino's creation. There were bronze doors that had been cast in 1750. In the interior was a madonna and child, with St. John in terra cotta, also by Sansovino. At the foot of the tower was a small white marble building, where one of the greatest "polley" games in the world was carried on regularly, under the license and protection of the government.

Italy's Greatest Art Loss.

The accident, which, in the eyes of Italy, amounts to a veritable catastrophe, is almost the greatest art loss the kingdom has ever suffered.

The tower showed sudden signs of decay last week, alarming the authorities. A longitudinal crack appeared in the corner of the wall facing the clock tower, and breaking two small windows.

In anticipation of an accident, the prefect of police forbade the usual Sun-

day night concert in the plaza, and warned the people not to approach too near the tower.

The authorities of the cathedral forbade visitors to ascend the tower, and ordered the bell ringing to be suspended. A gang of workmen had been engaged to commence the work of repair on the tower Tuesday, but it is believed that none of them were in the tower when it collapsed.

Fear for the Cathedral.

Out of the general chaos arising from the unlooked-for destruction of the tower, the attention of the Venetians has been turned upon the magnificent Cathedral. Prof. Wagner's statements have greatly alarmed them for the safety of the great edifice. Their one constant fear now is that the Cathedral also may crumble away. At the present time, however, there appears to be not the slightest evidence of any deterioration in the walls of the foundation of the church.

The Cathedral of St. Mark stands

quite alone among the buildings of the world in respect of its unequalled richness of material and decoration, and also from the fact that it has been constructed with the spoils of countless other buildings.

St. Mark's is built on the site of a chapel erected to contain the bones of the saint after whom the Cathedral is named. This chapel was gradually enlarged by various doges. First of all transepts were added, then the baptistery on the south and the atrium extending along the west and north of the nave, about 1150-1200. Next chapels were added north and south of the two transepts.

During the long period from its dedication in 1085 till the overthrow of the Venetian republic by Napoleon every doge's reign saw more addition to the rich decorations—mosaics, sculpture, wall linings, or columns of precious marbles. By degrees the whole walls inside and outside were completely faced either with glass mosaics on gold grounds or with precious colored marbles and porphyries, plain white marble being only used for sculpture, and then thickly covered with gold. The splendor and richness of effect thus produced is quite unique.

Most Unique of Cities.

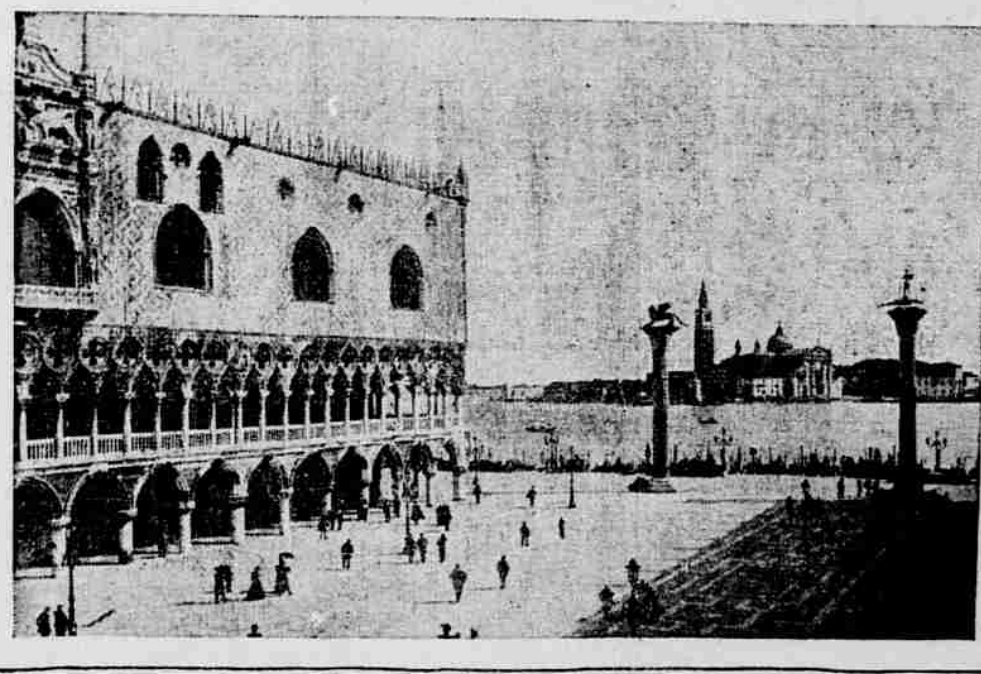
Like many other Italian cities of historic fame, Venice has its magnificent palaces, a world-famous Cathedral and renowned courts, which, to the visitor, are of great interest. It is not those, however, which first attract the attention of the stranger, for no sooner does he alight from the train and find himself surrounded by gondollers in fancy costume, whose boats are lying one against the other ready to convey him to the hotel, than the fascination of such a marked change of scenery dispels all thought of sightseeing.

One only wishes to indulge in absolute recreation in a swiftly gliding gondola from which he may watch the occupations and living of the Venetians.

The only city of its kind, Venice is always included in the itinerary of the tourist, its circumstances and conditions permit; and, though the most agreeable seasons are spring and fall, the heat of the summer months is not oppressive and the nights are cool. Its perfect immunity from dust and its noiseless highways are its chief advantages, yet the disturbing mosquito is very much in evidence, and almost every visitor, even after a stay of only two or three days, shows the marks of these merciless insects.

Built on 117 Isles.

The islands which comprise the city of Venice number 117, and lie two and one half miles from the mainland, in the Lagoon, a shallow arm of the Adri-



Palace of the Doges and the Lion of St. Mark's.

(Continued on Second Page.)